
INTRODUCTION TO JAPAN'S HISTORY AND CULTURE

2 credits (Fall)

入門 日本の歴史と文化 2単位(秋学期)

From Early Modern Japan to World War II

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Course Description/Objectives/Teaching Method/Intended Learning Outcome:

1. Course Description :

This course examines the major developments in Japanese history and culture from the Edo period (1603-1868) to the end of World War II. The focus is on the main issues and transformations in Japanese society, politics, foreign relations, and culture. The broad questions that will be addressed during the course are: what are the major transformations in Japanese modern history? What factors explain change? How have Japanese society and culture changed? How has Japan interacted with the world? By the end of the course, students are expected to have achieved an understanding of the broad picture and key points of modern Japan's historical development. Classes are a combination of lectures and discussions.

2. Assignments

2-1. Weekly comments

Students are expected to read all the assigned materials as preparation for class. The reading materials will be available in the "Teaching Material" field of Keio University's "Class Support" system (<https://www.edu.keio.jp/>). Students are required to write one short comment (max. 150 words) on the assigned reading material for that week. The comment must be uploaded into the "Report" field of the "Class Support" system by 11:00 am on Thursday (the day before class). The comment must not be a summary of the reading material; for example, it must be a critical assessment of the author's argument, or a reaction to some specific part/s of the material, or a comparison with the case of your/other countries, etc. In other words, it is important that the comment includes the student's original contribution.

3. Term paper

There is no final exam. Students are required to submit a term paper (1,500 words including footnotes) on any of the topics related to the period discussed in class. The paper should be sent to the lecturers by uploading it in the "Class Support" system's "Report" field by January 28, 2022.

* This course will be held online in the form of Zoom sessions.

Course Plan:

- 1 Orientation/Introduction
- 2 Japan before the 17th century
- 3 Japan during the Edo period (1603-1868)
- 4 Cultural flourishing and foreign relations during the Edo period
- 5 Collapse of the Tokugawa system and Japan's opening to the West
- 6 Restoration of imperial power and the making of a modern Japan I
- 7 Restoration of imperial power and the making of a modern Japan II
- 8 "Civilization and enlightenment" and the thinking of Fukuzawa Yukichi
- 9 The building of Japan's colonial empire
- 10 Mass culture and social movements during the "Taisho democracy" period
- 11 The rise of militarism
- 12 World War II
- 13 Defeat and Occupation

Other Review of reading materials and class note

Method of Evaluation:

- Participation in class (weekly commentaries and participation in class discussion): 50%
- Term paper: 50%

Textbooks:

Reading materials will be uploaded by the instructors at the beginning of the course.

Reference Books:

Reading materials will be uploaded by the instructors at the beginning of the course.

Lecturer's Comments to Students:

This course is aimed at those who are interested in the history and culture of Japan. A previous knowledge of Japanese history and culture is not required. The course will be conducted in English. Students with limited English ability are also welcome. Students are expected to participate in class discussions. More than two unexcused absences will lower a student's grade. The maximum number of students who can register for this course is 30. If more than 30 students register for this course, a selection will be made through an automatic drawing system.